

Written Testimony supporting
H.B. No. 7285 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING COMPLAINTS THAT ALLEGE
MISCONDUCT BY LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY PERSONNEL.

Senator Doyle, Senator Kissel, Representative Tong, and distinguished members of the Joint
Committee on Judiciary:

My name is Donna Haghighat, and I am an engaged resident of West Hartford, CT.

I am writing in support of Proposed House Bill 7285, which intends to ensure compliance with the provisions of section 7-294bb of the Connecticut General Statutes concerning the acceptance, processing, and investigation of a complaint from a member of the public relating to alleged misconduct committed by law enforcement agency personnel.

I have had very positive interactions with the police officers in West Hartford except on one occasion where I was ticketed for a traffic stop sign that was not actually in existence. I did not fight it as I know I was exceeding the speed limit.

Proposed House Bill 7285 recognizes that our police complaint process is broken, but it could go further to fix it. I therefore support the intention of Proposed House Bill 7285, but ask this committee to amend this bill so that its intent is fully realized. A recent survey by the ACLU of Connecticut, of which I am a member, clearly shows that many Connecticut police agencies still make it difficult for members of the public to obtain information regarding complaint forms and processes easily. In some cases, this lack of transparency violates state law. In my town, Hartford, it took people longer to reach someone who could answer questions about the complaint process than any other jurisdiction. It is clear that we must amend H.B. 7285 to:

- 1) establish meaningful penalties for law enforcement agencies that do not comply with state complaint acceptance and investigation laws,
- 2) create a standardized complaint form that is compliant with best practices and translated into all commonly-spoken languages in Connecticut, and
- 3) require law enforcement agencies to track complaint data and to annually report specific complaint information to the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management.

Establishing a transparent, accessible police complaint process is necessary for creating a truly fair and just police force in Connecticut—one that community members like me can trust and depend on. Amending H.B. 7285 will encourage the community's faith in the police complaint process and ensure that we are holding our law enforcement agencies accountable.

I urge the members of this committee to amend and support Proposed House Bill 7285.

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